

**August**



## **Is it Safe for me to Exercise?**

If you're overweight or have been sedentary for a while, you'll want to get back into exercising gradually. In addition, you should have a thorough checkup before starting an exercise program.

Ask your doctor what heart rates you should target while exercising, especially if you're over 50, are pregnant, or have a condition that might make it difficult for you to exercise. Once you get the go-ahead, start slowly. Drink lots of water, including a glass before and after exercising, and keep a water bottle with you at all times. Keeping the body supplied with plenty of water helps prevent heat exhaustion and dehydration. See a doctor immediately if you feel light-headed, disoriented, faint, or experience chest pain, dizziness, and nausea.

Avoid being called a "weekend warrior." If you're sedentary all week -- that is, staring at a monitor or being a couch potato -- don't go full blast on the weekends to make up. Not only is it a good way to get injured, but older, infrequent exercisers who work out too vigorously may even risk a heart attack, according to a 2000 study by Barry Franklin of the William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. He adds that any exercise is better than none, but that sedentary types should exercise moderately and check with their doctor starting a workout regime.

Not every heart, in fact, can handle all the rigors of exercise. If you have heart disease, you should have a thorough checkup before starting an exercise program, even if you just want to walk around the block. If you have heart pains or experience shortness of breath after a walk up the stairs, your doctor may want to give you a stress test, an exam that monitors your heart while you walk on a treadmill or ride a stationary bicycle.

The good news is that most people with heart disease can continue to lead an active life. As soon as you get your doctor's okay, you can start reaping the benefits of exercise. You'll feel stronger, more energetic, and less stressed. And one muscle will be especially grateful.

### **References**

-Ades, P.A. and Coello, C.E. Effects of exercise and cardiac rehabilitation on cardiovascular outcomes. *Medical Clinics of North America*. January 2000. 84(1):251-264. -Leon, A.S. Exercise following myocardial infarction. *Sports Medicine*. May 2000. 29(5): 301-311.



The vision of the Whitehall Cardiovascular Disease Task Force is to improve the heart health of all Whitehall residents. Please visit our website:

[www.co.franklin.oh.us/board\\_of\\_health/Whitehallheart.org](http://www.co.franklin.oh.us/board_of_health/Whitehallheart.org)